

Leominster Allotment Association

Newsletter January 2017

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO LAA MEMBERS!

Harvest Supper 7th October 2016

Many of us enjoyed the fruits of our labours at the annual Harvest Supper, held in the delightful John Abel room at Grange Court. We were able to sample a variety of delicious dishes brought along by plot-holders and friends. The puddings were to die for! The spread was as good as (if not better) than the fare provided in many cafes and restaurants. Quizzes and raffles added an air of jollity to the occasion.

The Mayor of Leominster, Cllr Angela Pendleton and her consort Cllr Roger Pendleton joined us for the evening. The Mayor was very encouraging to all gardeners. Staff from the Town Council also came along to join in the fun.

Francis and Nick had kindly volunteered to act as judges for the allotment awards for 2016. They had periodically inspected the allotment site, monitoring changes and developments on all plots. Although it was hard to reach a final decision, as many plots are so well tended, they made awards as follows:

- 1st - Lesley Griffiths and Mike Brock Plot 86**
- 2ND - Lesley Griffiths and Mike Brock Plot 67**
- 3RD - Bernard Preece Plot 45**

The following were noted as the most improved allotments during the year:

- Plot 1 Cara Lewis
- Plot 2 Mrs M Morris
- Plot 5 Mrs Addyman

Well done to all!

A big thank you to everyone who contributed and made the evening a success.

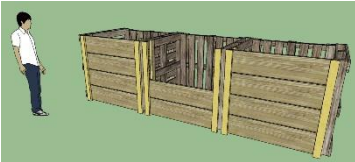
Bisley Community Composting Scheme

On Saturday 8th October, a group of allotment gardeners went to Bisley allotment site to see their Community Composting Scheme.

We had an interesting day, learning a great deal about organising and managing a composting scheme.

The community scheme has been very successful and contributes to village life by working with the local school. The visit highlighted the planning and management needed for success – site, infrastructure, funding, manpower, equipment and time.

Composting



Leaf Mould

Ray has constructed a leaf mould bin for everyone to use on the grass area in front of the large composting bays.

This is for leaves only.

Thank you Ray for doing this for everyone's benefit.

Large composting bins

At present, please do not use the large composting bins and do not leave any materials for composting in this area. The Town Council is finalising plans for use.

Composting bins on plots

Many plot-holders have good composting systems on their allotments that cope with their green waste. Some use plastic composting bins and others have made bins from pallets.

All non-compostable waste should be taken away from the allotment site for appropriate disposal elsewhere.

Day Trips

Following the day trip to Bisley, it was suggested that we organise some more days out.

A trip to **Birmingham Botanical Gardens is being organised for Saturday 18th March** – see attached flyer.

£22.00 for LAA members and £24.00 for others. This covers coach, entry fee and fish & chip lunch.

£5 non-refundable deposit needed by 10th February.

Please place booking forms with deposit in an envelope marked *Birmingham Botanical Gardens* in the box in the Community Shed (the one used for seed orders), or drop it into the Town Council Offices.

Please let us know if there are any places you would particularly like to visit. If this spring trip is successful we will organise something in the autumn.

Allotment Buddies

There are many experienced and some new allotment gardeners on our site. If you would like to be an Allotment Buddy to help out or advise plot-holders, please give your names and contact details to the Town Council office staff and we will get back to you to organise a team to support others.

Allotment Awards 2017



Judges for the 2017 Allotment awards will be visiting the site once the cultivation season starts properly.

The awards process was set up to celebrate and encourage good gardening practice and to help raise and maintain high standards through a little friendly competition. The judges make their decisions using the following criteria:

Cultivation 50%

Productive plot throughout the year
 A varied range of crops regularly harvested
 Evidence of crop rotation
 Healthy plants
 Use of companion planting
 Innovative use of plot e.g. frames to utilise vertical space
 Plot free from perennial weeds and as free as possible from annual weeds.

Environment 25%

Flowering plants which encourage pollinating insects
 Evidence of attracting natural predators e.g. bug-boxes, small log piles, pond
 Evidence of composting
 Rainwater collection from shed/greenhouse
 Use of mulches e.g. compost, well-rotted manure.

Appearance 25%

Plot number clearly visible (essential for judges)
 Creative design and use of decorative features
 Absence of rubbish and hazards
 Good maintenance of structures e.g. greenhouses, sheds, paths and boundary fences
 Stakes and supports secure and cane tips protected to avoid injury

It could be YOU receiving the award this autumn!

Allotment Association Committee

The Leominster Allotment Association (LAA) has an elected committee of volunteers who work on your behalf.

The LAA's duties include:

- Providing an interface between tenants and the Town Council, meeting regularly with the Town Council staff re the management and maintenance of the allotment site
- Representing association members at the quarterly regional meetings of N.A.S.
- Insuring association members' plots for Public Liability for injuries sustained by any persons on their plots
- Insuring the allotment site for Public Liability when holding any social events
- Initiating and participating in developments and projects which aim to improve the allotment site
- Securing funding, where possible, to enable delivery of project plans

- Organising annual seed orders from Kings Seeds Ltd
- Organising allotment events e.g. open days, outings.

The fee has been £5 since the allotment site was started.

The next AGM will be in May and we hope that some new folk will volunteer to join the committee as new ideas and enthusiasm are always welcome.

Committee members may be contacted through the Town Council office.

Allotment rents and LAA dues

It is hard to believe that it will soon be time to pay our allotment rents and LAA subscription for the coming year. The Town Council will send out invoices soon, so please let the admin staff know if you have changed your contact details recently (address, email, phone).

The Town Council team has agreed to collect the LAA dues at the same time as the allotment rent.

Allotment plant and produce stall



The LAA is having a stall at the Leominster Festival Family Fun Day on Saturday 10th June 2017.

We will sell plants, seedlings, preserves, cakes and produce.

Please plant a few extra seeds this year and donate the plants to this sale. We will let you know more nearer the time.

If you want to help plan and organise the event or take a shift on the stall on the day, please let us know.

Gill – 01568 589287, Cathy - 01568 616464.

Hedge trimming

Western Power and the Town Council have trimmed trees and hedges around the allotment site. This allows more daylight to the plots at the top of the site and will hopefully help to dry out the ground.

A message from Julie Debbage Allotment Site Manager

Happy New Year!

The beginning of a new year is a great time for planning new crops, trying out new ideas and designing new layouts.

We are getting an increasing number of enquiries about renting plots and as we only have a very limited amount available, if anyone felt that their allotment plot was too large for them to cultivate 75%, please let us know. There is an opportunity to reduce the size of plot down but to still keep part of the plot and

allow someone else the opportunity to rent a small plot. If you feel this would suit you, please don't hesitate to get in touch by email grounds@leominstertowncouncil.gov.uk or phone 01568 611734 or mobile 07587 969691.

Allotment inspections take place at the beginning of each month, by myself, a Town Councillor and a member of the Allotment Association. This is a way of keeping the site productive and safe. If you need extra help with maintaining your plot in the short term (e.g. following an operation/bereavement), please let either myself or a Committee Member of the Association know, as we can provide help and support to enable you to continue caring for your plot.

The allotment hedges will be cut over the coming weeks, weather permitting, so please bear with us while we carry out these essential works.

Just a reminder that the Allotment Bills will be sent out in late February or early March for the year 2017/18. Could you please ensure that any changes to your contact details are reported to the office at the time of payment.

Many Thanks!

DIARY DATES

Sat 4th Feb

**Seed Swap
The Courtyard Hereford
12.00-15.30**

13.30 – Talk by Adam Alexander “The Adventures of a Seed Detective”

There will be a bewildering range of vegetable and ornamental seed varieties – saved seed and left-over packets – as well as plants. If you are planning to take along seeds to swap, **please date your own seed and give a variety if known.**

Sat 18th March

Trip to **Birmingham Botanical Gardens**

Weds 10th May

Allotment Association AGM.
This will be held at the Town Council Offices
Leominster Festival

2nd – 11th June

Saturday 10th June

Family Fun Day at the Grange. Allotment plant stall.

Contact the Town Council

Town Council Offices Phone 01568 611734
E-mail grounds@leominstertowncouncil.gov.uk
or admin@leominstertowncouncil.gov.uk